

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Diffuse Idiopathic Skeletal Hyperostosis in a Late Nineteenth Early Twentieth Century Almshouse Cemetery

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PAGES: 151

Diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis (DISH) is a rheumatology term for a particular type of vertebral arthritis involving the calcification of the right aspect of the anterolateral ligament (ALL) and the presence of ligament ossification at particular peripheral joints. DISH is most common among middle to late age males and is thought to be present in 10% of males over the age of 65. Although the etiology of the disease is unknown, many have associated it with diabetes and a high status lifestyle. In this thesis, DISH is examined in a late nineteenth, early twentieth century almshouse cemetery known as the Milwaukee County Institution Grounds (MCIG) cemetery. Due to the health and diet of the immigrant peoples living in Milwaukee during the MCIG cemetery's usage, 1850 to 1974, it is suspected that diabetes would not have been a common disorder, thus leading to little to no DISH presence in the cemetery population. However, DISH is seen in the MCIG population which suggests that the etiology of DISH is not a result of diet or diabetes but other factors altogether.